

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Applicant has canceled claims 2, 5, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 in favor of newly submitted claims 68-77 which clearly and carefully distinguish over the art of record. Newly added claims 68-77 are included in the claims of Group I.

More specifically, applicant has rewritten allowed claims 2, 5, 8, 12, 17, 20, 23, 34, 52 and 25, as independent claims 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, and 77, respectively, and are likewise believed to be in obvious condition for allowance.

Allowed claim 23, now claim 74, was amended as to form only by changing "member" to - - members (line 6) and "portions" to - - portion (line 8) to provide better syntax.

Allowed claim 25, now claim 77, was amended as to form only by changing "radially inner male projection" to - - projecting tongue (line 17) to comply with the antecedent language in line 14 of former claim 25.

These amendments require no further search and do not raise any new issues but merely corrects some informal matters and redrafts the allowed claims in independent form.

Since all of the claims now remaining in the case are in obvious condition for allowance, an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

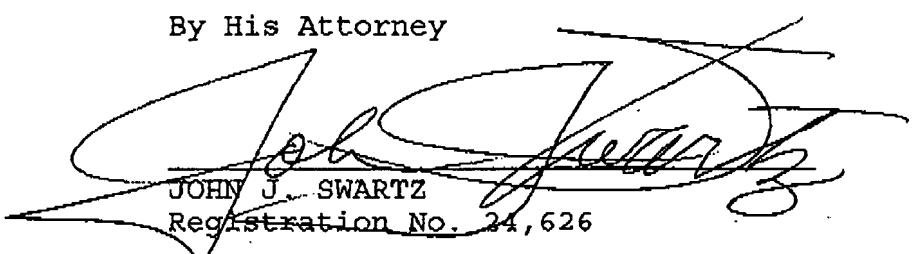
Applicant hereby Petitions the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks to extend the time for reply to the office action dated December 13, 2001, for two (2) months from March 13, 2002, to May 13, 2002. The Fee of \$200 is covered by the aforementioned check of \$336.00 filed with the Patent Office on February 12, 2002. After subtracting the \$84.00 claim fee and the \$200.00 extension fee from the \$336.00, kindly return the overpayment of \$52.00 to applicant's attorney.

In the event the examiner is of the opinion that the above-identified application does not overcome all of the rejections and does not place the case in obvious condition for allowance, the examiner is respectfully requested to call the applicant's attorney collect to set up either a telephone interview or a personal interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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By His Attorney



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